

The Prince With No Worlds to Conquer

By GEORGE F. KEARNEY



ALL England is still speculating as to what the Prince of Wales told Mr. Lloyd George and his cabinet on that memorable morning, two days after he returned from his tour of the Empire, when he appeared unexpectedly at Number 10 Downing Street. It was not merely a formal visit. A restless prince, fresh from a trip that was a complete diplomatic triumph, asked for bigger things to do.

When he returned home he found the English newspapers discussing how best he could further serve the Empire. Correspondents who followed him throughout his trip had privately informed their editors that the prince, while perfectly willing to do anything that the government required of him, was anxious to take a more active part in politics. Mr. Massingham in the London *Nation* had been urging that he be appointed Viceroy of Ireland in the hope that the amiable prince could bring about a friendly solution of the Irish question. The prince is understood to have given a great deal of thought to this suggestion and was willing to undertake the responsibility on condition, however, that he be given a free hand.

In other quarters it was suggested that the prince call a conference of men representing both the dominions and the colonies of the British Empire with a view to discussing the many difficult problems that have arisen in their relation to the mother country. It was felt that this would be a fitting climax to his successful trip in which he seemed to win so thoroughly the hearts of the people. The question arose here, again, as to whether the prince would be given a free hand or whether he would function merely as an agreeable figurehead.

The Prince of Wales is said to have some very definite ideas in regard to the future relation of Great Britain to the Empire. He has been keen enough to accept the perpetual ovation extended him during his recent journey in a graceful manner but he spent a great deal of his time quizzing the people he met intimately with a view to getting an understanding of the new movements that seem to be disrupting the Empire. He is the one man in all England who has attempted seriously to study the problem of the modern Empire at first hand and his viewpoint is said to be in accord with the younger school of British political thinkers. He was particularly impressed with Mr. Hughes, the Labor prime minister of Australia, and he has frequently expressed his admiration of General Smuts, of South Africa. But then, again, tradition discountenances the right of a prince to hold pronounced political views and certainly he is not expected to express any opinion that would bring him in opposition to the ideas of any of his subjects.

The Prince of Wales did not like the postponement of his trip through India until the situation there had cleared. He was eager to go anyway, and the fear for his personal safety did not please him. Moreover, it was argued that the prince's avoidance of India might be assigned to a lack of personal courage on his part and also a confession on the part of the representatives of the Crown in India that they could not cope with the situation. Certainly the prince cannot be accused of cowardice after the many experiences the British general staff had with their prince who would not stay out of the front line trenches. During the war he particularly resented the undue care taken of him and it comes as no surprise that he was disappointed at the curtailment of the trip to India.

All these things have come up for active discussion at the meeting of the cabinet and the king's privy council. They now realize that the little slip of a boy, winsome but ineffectual, whom they knew before the war, has changed.

"During those four years," the prince has said of his war experiences, "I found my manhood." Then there recurs frequently in his speeches (which he now insists upon writing himself except on very special occasions) the statement that he wants to represent in the presence of his elders the "younger generation of England." The British Empire has a new Prince of Wales, eager to play more than a polite rôle in the dark future of his nation and more confident than his ancestors that his subjects are not adverse to the active participation, along constitutional lines, of the Crown in politics.

Already the Prince of Wales has shown himself to be the strongest of his line. Edward the Seventh was a jovial king, fond of pleasure, but he did not have the mental qualities of his mother, Queen Victoria. George the Fifth's reign is frequently spoken of as the darkest of his family, for, prior to the war, there was a marked lack of enthusiasm in England for the royal family. It will be remembered that Edward the Seventh once ventured the prediction that his

son George would be the last to sit on the English throne. The beginning of the present reign saw the rising tide of radicalism in England with a growing discontent with the old order sweeping over the country. There has been a strong movement for a republic for the British Empire during his reign and certainly the British Crown has had many occasions to remember that the monarchy is strictly a constitutional one. Yet the war brought the royal family into more prominence and the advisors of the king have kept him before his subjects as much as possible in always an agreeable rôle. Hence, when H. G. Wells, during the war, suggested that a republic be set up, the personal popularity of the royal family, and particularly the affection of the English people for their Prince of Wales, made his movement seem ridiculous.

As a matter of fact, the open advocacy of a republic by H. G. Wells has greatly strengthened the hand of the monarchy. It is interesting to note that the Labor party of Great Britain, planning to take over the government and make Great Britain a socialistic state, still would tolerate a royal family. Mr. J. H. Thomas, the president of the National Union of Railway and Transportation Workers, who is so frequently mentioned as the "next Labor prime minister of Great Britain," has gone to some length in his new book, "When Labor Rules," to explain that the king must be retained as an effective symbol of the nation, although the ideals of the Labor party seem at variance with the idea of special privileges granted to anyone by reason of their birth.

Had the Prince of Wales exhibited less real character during the war, the attitude of the English people toward their monarchy would have been very different. King Edward's prophecy might have come true. At best the prince, with less of his power to compel affection, would have inherited a shadowy throne. It would have been a doubtful inheritance and his plight must have been as unhappy as that of the late King Alexander of Greece. Instead, the English people are looking forward to the reign of the present Prince of Wales to restore the real dignity of the throne. He is to be a new king in the history of dynasties who will function as a champion of the common people. He is the one man in the whole Empire who does not have to struggle for his

is very greatly indebted.

A situation arose in regard to the hunger strike of the late lord mayor of Cork which illustrates how inarticulate the Crown has become since the days of the energetic Victoria and how really a constitutional monarch could be used to reconcile warring factions within the Empire. The relatives of Terence MacSwiney petitioned King George for a clemency of the Crown. It is well known that this present king has a sympathetic attitude toward Ireland which differs slightly from the opinions held by the present ministers. The response was not made immediately and, when the king replied, one read between the lines of his note a real regret that the matter of determining whether the lord mayor should be released must be referred to the government in power. England knows that both King George and his son are in favor of a more kindly treatment of Ireland.

One gathers that the restlessness of the Prince of Wales is watched in governmental circles with very great concern. An open break between the prince and the cabinet might end disastrously for the cabinet because of the prince's personal popularity. It is significant, then, that the prince has been rebuffed by the cabinet in his desire to do a man's job for his people. Since his return from his tour of the Empire he has slipped back into his old life with its round of formalities and hunting parties. Therein lies the tragedy of a prince with no worlds to conquer.

A study of the face of the Prince of Wales gives us an insight into his present state of mind. His successes have not turned his head and there is not a haughty or a self-conscious line in his face. His eyes quiver with an interest in everybody about him. It is an intensely human countenance. A motion picture director would say of him that he had a good "screen" face, and he certainly takes an excellent picture. Yet even those pictures, and certainly his face which one sees as he rides through London, reveal a quality which we have called wistful. Study this expression a bit more closely and you will discover that there are elements of sadness that impel this wistful look. He is a prince rich in the love of his people, but a beggar indeed, when it comes to responsibilities. It is quite evident that the present government does not intend to allow the prince to fulfill his ambition to play a more vital part in the life of his nation.

What, then, is his attitude toward the perfunctory tasks that make up his everyday life? Almost every minute of the time he appears in public he is being photographed. He has been snapped under all sorts of conditions and it is remarkable that there are no pictures revealing a bored prince. Nor has he ever been known to lose his temper even under the most vexing circumstances. He has developed a genius for sensing his crowd and he always falls in with the spirit of the moment. His craftsmanship is perfect. Every public appearance yields a new incident to endear him to his people.

Not long ago he was asked by the London *Daily Mirror* to write a message to the children of the Empire in which he would embody his philosophy of life. He epitomized his whole attitude in his closing sentence when he said, "Always play the game to the end." It was, in fact, the autobiography of his past, present and future. No matter how disappointed he may be by the lack of real responsibilities, no matter how much he sighs for worlds to conquer, England has the confidence that their prince will play his game to the end. His father has a certain soured expression but it is inconceivable that the prince would ever reveal in his countenance any more than a sad wistfulness. Being pleasant is a mighty difficult job and particularly so if one is a prince. The royal family is compelled to take their recreation very seriously and a whole nation watches the young heir as a stern but kindly parent would. If he appears in uniform it must be correct in every detail. There are a hundred thousand odd points of etiquette that must be observed scrupulously by the prince. He must never forget a name or a face. He must have the history of England's countryside at his finger-tips for use in impromptu speeches. He must have an easy familiarity with the history and the work of the many institutions which he visits during the year. When entertaining a foreign diplomat he must

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General Pershing and Prince of Wales review U. S. troops in London.

position, and, as such, he could function as a check on the ambitions of the professional politician.

In their Prince of Wales, whom the nation worships, the English people are seeing a new hope for the future. They expect him to rule by the divine right of their love and Great Britain is weary of the type of political autocrat who wields power that would make a czar turn green with envy. They want their new monarch to symbolize their national sense of honor in an active way, for the English people are not particularly proud of the rôle their government has played recently in world politics. It is hoped that the Prince of Wales will speak with the voice of the traditional England to whom the world